
NORTHWEST ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH NOTES

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PERCEPTIONS AND IMAGES OF THE WILD MAN

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ABSTRACT

The Sasquatch phenomenon is a regional example of the more universal wild man myth. The wild man myth is a persistent and consistent phenomenon which could be the object of fruitful study in the absence of a Sasquatch specimen. In this context, discussion of the need for, or absence of, a specimen must be viewed as subsidiary, if not irrelevant.

In responding to Roderick Sprague's (1970) call for discussion of the Sasquatch phenomenon, I would like to begin with some personal observations. Those of us who are interested in one facet or another of the question cannot but be grateful for the responses which have already appeared in NARN. Willingness to discuss the question, however, is quite different from being adequately informed about it. I observe with genuine regret that the majority of scientists who have been quoted in the media regarding the subject simply do not know what they are talking about. I would appreciate it if in the future scientists who are unfamiliar with the subject would admit as much when queried. A scientist is certainly entitled to believe what he will about the Sasquatch. But the media are prone to assume that a scientist addressing a subject does so with knowledge, and in turn convey that impression to the public.

Apart from the careless, if not intellectually dishonest, attitude with which most scientists approach the subject, the most distressing tendency I find in the discussion of the subject is the continual reference to the day when a specimen is brought in. Sprague (1970) mentions it in his editorial. Thorington (1974) alludes to it: "In the fall, the hunters are out there killing everything. It's highly unlikely that they wouldn't bring some in."¹ Green (1973b:4) observes:

The investigation is still largely in the hands of untrained amateurs, with little indication of much change until the day when the scientific establishment is presented with a Sasquatch in the flesh -- at which time we will no doubt learn that thousands of leading anthropologists and zoologists have been on our side all along, and are ready to tell the world about it.

To the end of settling the question, Green concludes by urging hunters generally to shoot and kill an individual at the first opportunity.

I will only note the moral question as to whether an individual ought to be shot, and deal fleetingly with whether or not it is reasonable to expect that a specimen will be taken by chance. The question I want to address is whether we need a specimen to make the phenomenon worthy of scientific interest and to arrive at the conclusion that a large, hairy species of herbivorous, semi-aquatic, nocturnal, non-social hominid exists which is

presently unrecognized by science. There is no question that it would be easier for the scientific community to take the matter seriously if there were a specimen. In fact, they would not have much choice.

I see the chance taking of a specimen as highly unlikely. The adults are huge, powerful, and quick. The species is, in my estimation, the second most intelligent among land dwelling mammals. It seems to prefer a habitat in which man is very nearly helpless, and it is nocturnal. I do not believe, however, that the taking of a specimen is necessary for the preception of the species, or the fruitful discussion of its behavior, physiology, or place within the evolution of hominids. In other words, I see the Sasquatch phenomenon as primarily an intellectual opportunity -- indeed, an intellectual challenge. To see why, several facts need to be pointed out.

First, the four million year fossil history of *Paranthropus (Australopithecus robustus, A. boisei)* demands that we abandon the one hominid paradigm. Napier (1972:204) may be correct when he says, concerning the reality of the Sasquatch: "Among other things we shall have to re-write the story of human evolution." I doubt the adjustment of theory will be quite so drastic. Whoever proves to be right, the idea of our physiological uniqueness, which probably has its roots in the old superstition that we were made in the image of a (necessarily anthropomorphic) deity, it now demonstrably invalid.

This, in turn, brings up the old saw that man invented anthropomorphic deities. Behind this fashionable supposition is a second fact. There is, among mankind, a nearly universal wild man myth. Very little has been written about it. Kirtley (1964:90) offers a few of the thousands of local names for it and then dismisses them as "quaintly absurd demonic beings long since relegated to the conceptual realm of the nursery." By whom, and on what grounds, he does not say. His attitude is typical and seemingly based on impeccable logic. Wild men are sometimes characters in European fairy tales, therefore all wild men are quaintly absurd etc., etc.

The third fact is that wild men are regarded as real animals by inhabitants of the Caucasus region and central Asia in the Soviet Union. Soviet Army officers have testified to briefly examining several individuals, alive and dead. The late Prof. Boris Porshnev and the surviving Hominoid Problem Seminar, composed of interested laymen who meet at the Darwin Museum in Moscow, have established that much. Contrary to the view expressed in *The Neanderthals* (Constable 1973), they have not relied "mainly on descriptions by Mongol caravan drivers and wandering Tibetan monks," but rather on those provided by Soviet citizens. The inclusion of the wild man in Buddhist medical encyclopedias, however, has been noted by Vlček (1959, 1960).

The fourth fact is that parallel to and independent of the effort in the Soviet Union, laymen in North America have compiled a generally consistent collection of reported sightings of and encounters with an animal which was commonly referred to as a "wild man" during the nineteenth century, and by a variety of names during the twentieth. The roles of Dahinden (1973) and Green (1973a, 1973b) are the most easily discernible. The 1967 film of an adult female taken by the late Roger Patterson is the most spectacular piece of evidence anywhere, and Krantz's (1971, 1972) careful analyses of handprints, footprints, and means for estimating weights of

individuals of the species is a welcome exception to the myopia which physical anthropologists ordinarily experience in the face of such a truly exciting prospect. Malcolm (1973), in his report on the Murphysboro incidents, sets a standard both welcome and reasonable.

Although a comprehensive treatment as I will outline it here is presently unavailable, the raw data are plentiful. The majority of the information from the Soviet Union has not been translated into English. Tchernine (1971), however, offers a brief view and Porshnev's *The Struggle for Troglodytes* (1968) has been translated into French by Heuvelmans (1974). It is not, then, lack of information which is the problem. Nor can it be seriously argued that the layman's reliance on informants is a basic flaw, since within the context of the wild man myth these reports are not significant in terms of either quantity or quality. I find a great deal of merit in the suggestion of Bayanov and Bourtsev (personal communication 1974) that "psychological obstacles" is the appropriate term. But lacking the credentials necessary to advance so intricate and intriguing a proposition, I shall characterize the problem as simple lack of interest.

Why is there a lack of interest? To the end of contributing toward an ultimate answer to that question, I would like to illustrate how great the lack of interest is.

One of the several interpretations of the growing fossil evidence of hominid evolution in Africa is that Robinson (1956) correctly argued for the separation between *Homo (Australopithecus) africanus* and *Paranthropus*. He did so on the basis that *Paranthropus* was a significantly larger, wet woods dwelling, herbivorous hominid which was crested in both sexes. In addition, he suggested that on the basis of the six-cusped molar as a diagnostic feature, *Meganthropus paleojavanicus* is properly *Paranthropus*.²

If an animal is represented by the Sasquatch phenomenon, as I believe it is, it can be described as a wet woods dwelling, herbivorous hominid which, based on the visual evidence of the Patterson film, as well as sworn eyewitness accounts, is crested in the female and the male. If a species with a four million year history occurs in South Africa and Java, it could have reached North America, just as we did.

The two major arguments against the hypothesis that *Paranthropus* survives are that he was not big enough, and that he is extinct. Neither has much merit on close examination.

Robinson suggests that when *H. africanus* stood perhaps 44 in and weighed 50-80 lb, *Paranthropus* stood 60 in and weighed at least 150 lb, if not several hundred. Since our stature has increased by 50% and our weight by 100% roughly speaking, the idea that our most closely related animal relative might also have increased in size is not impossible. For a herbivore, it might even be more likely. Given an increase in size comparable to our own, *Paranthropus* today would stand 90 in and weigh at least 300 lb.

There is a romantic story going around that during the first half of *Homo erectus*'s time on earth the species destroyed *Paranthropus*. Why (let alone how) *H. erectus* would set out to systematically destroy a species

which lived in a distinctly separate habitat and was not in any way in competition with it is not explained. Presumably, the image of *Paranthropus* was judged to be offensive. There is evidence that we ate our fellow man in those days (we shared the habitat and were in competition with one another), but there is no evidence that man ever ate *Paranthropus*.

The next to last bastion which the physical anthropologist falls back to when presented with these facts is that *Paranthropus* is extinct. But as every sophomore anthropology major knows, those digging for fossils less than a million years old are likely to be looking for *Homo*. The site they select will relate to the habitat of *Homo*, not *Paranthropus*.

The last bastion of the physical anthropologist is to demand a specimen. That is understandable enough, since there is a long and grand tradition of laymen handing physical anthropologists important discoveries. But the rational for not being interested in the possibility that another hominid might survive is even more quaint.

The story of ancient and mysterious giant sized tracks is an old, old story, Dr. T. D. McCown, professor of physical anthropology at the University of California said yesterday [mid-October 1958].

Speaking of Bigfoot's gigantic 16-inch tracks which have appeared on the Bluff Creek access road construction job, Dr. McCown said that such tracks have been reported since the beginning of time.

He said that records show reports of footprints, most of them the same size as the ones found in Humboldt County. Such records indicate that millions of huge tracks have been found through the years. He did not specify their origin.

Most of the track reports have come from Africa and Asia, although many have been reported in North and South America. Some tracks have also been found in Europe, the professor said.

If the Humboldt County Bigfoot is tracked down and discovered it will be the first time in history that the mystery has been solved, Dr. McCown said.

He went on to say that there have been also many reports of tiny footprints supposedly made by little people (Green 1973b:52-53).³

Napier (1972:15) offers a more recent, and somewhat more earnest, view of scientific attitudes:

It has become a boring cliché of the monster establishment that scientists are afraid that the frailties of their own doctrines would be exposed should they so

much as admit the existence of unknown animals or unknown forces.

On the contrary, I have found that nothing intrigues a scientist more than monster tales. Most of my colleagues in Britian and the United States delight in speculating on possible theories, and often come up with ingenious solutions that seem to owe more to science fiction than to the principles and methodology of science. This is the stuff of which coffee-breaks are made, and I can assure the monster establishment that their suspicions of the fraternity are quite without foundation. If there is a conspiracy of silence, it derives at best from scientific caution, and at worst from sheer ignorance of the issues, but certainly not from a desire to hush up the truth [italics added].

I have listened as carefully as I could to the public pronouncements and private explanations, and this is what I have heard: "The wild man is a universal myth. What you say you saw was a wild man (or wild man footprints). We physical anthropologists don't ordinarily chase myths. Bring us a specimen, and then we'll talk about it."

The wild man is very probably the oldest, hardest, and most popular myth of the human race. The wild man myth is related to the Sasquatch phenomenon in two ways. First, Sasquatch is one of hundreds, if not thousands, of local names which have been assigned to this standard figure by groups who were either unaware of, or uninterested in, its broader occurrence. Second, the wild man myth, with its curiously consistent image maintained over five thousand years of human history and countless cultures, may constitute one of several powerful arguments which can be advanced for the presence of a real animal behind the myth.

The availability of information on wild man myths from different places and times varies. It is to the practiced eye of the late Richard Bernheimer, an art scholar, that we owe our thanks for the authoritative source on the medieval wild man, as well as a thorough overview of the wild man in the western cultural heritage.

Wild Men in the Middle Ages is no ordinary book. The footnotes make fascinating reading. The Table of Contents is a testimonial to Bernheimer's conceptual bent:

- 1 The Natural History of the Wild Man
- 2 His Mythological Personality
- 3 His Theatrical Embodiment
- 4 The Learned Aspect
- 5 The Erotic Connotations
- 6 His Heraldic Role

Each of his fifty chosen illustrations is eloquent testimony to its place in medieval society. And I would not dare try to improve on Bernheimer's (1952:1-2) own introduction to his subject.

Since the title of this book is startling, implying concern for madness, passion, and violence, it may be well to assure the reader from the start that wild men are imaginary creatures and that their name is a technical term. It would be difficult, in fact, to find another less shocking name for them, since the one employed here has been in common usage since the Middle Ages and is one of the few which denote the subject unambiguously. This book does not deal with actual outlaws, lechers, and bad men, then, or at least not primarily.

Instead, it deals with a literary and artistic figure whose imaginary character is proved by its appearance; it is a hairy man curiously compounded of human and animal traits, without, however, sinking to the level of an ape. It exhibits upon its naked human anatomy a growth of fur, leaving bare only its face, feet, and hands, at times its knees and elbows, or the breasts of the female of the species. Frequently the creature is shown wielding a heavy club or mace, or the trunk of a tree; and since its body is usually naked except for its shaggy covering, it may hide its nudity under a strand of twisted foliage worn around its loins. Where any characteristics other than these appear, there is a possibility that instead of a wild man we may be beholding another imaginary figure, such as a devil, faun, or satyr. The creature itself may appear without its fur, its club, or its loin ornament. Any of its characteristics may be said to designate the species.

This strange relative of *Homo sapiens*, a lively and sometimes pungent commentary on the bestial side of his nature, plays an astoundingly persistent, although on the whole subordinate, part in the art and literature of the Middle Ages. But even though the frequency of the wild man's appearance in art and letters is not quite matched by the importance accorded him in medieval thinking, his ubiquity must be regarded as a sign that he represented a major, if unacknowledged, trend of thought [italics added].

Bernheimer died in 1958, so we will never know what his reaction to the Sasquatch might have been. But I think he gave us an indication by noting the popularity of Tarzan and relating in some detail the circumstances surrounding the "rousing welcome which Boston accorded" a fraudulent "nature man" in 1913. He concludes:

Between this recent story, a comment on the gullibility of modern city dwellers, and the story of Enkidu lies the whole range of recorded history, containing in its span such figures of wild men as the satyrs and fauns, the legendary inhabitants of the Golden Age, and the noble savages of the Enlightenment (Bernheimer 1952:3).

To better understand what Bernheimer is talking about, let us briefly examine five famous wild men within the western cultural heritage. The first wild man Bernheimer notes is Enkidu, companion to Gilgamesh. He was a large, powerful, hairy hominid, a graminivore, dumb, and solitary. Although he was born in the mountains, his name means Lord of the Reed Marshes.

The second wild man is Polyphemos, a large hominid whose name means multiple speech defects, and who was the son of the god of the sea. Although as a character in the *Odyssey* he is a one-eyed shephard, he is also a cyclops. In the midst of Odysseus's narrative there is a single expository paragraph which describes cyclopes as a violent race which lived in mountain caves and trusted to providence for its wheat, barley, and grapes. Although in the narrative Polyphemos's fellow cyclopes respond to his cries after Odysseus blinds him, in this paragraph they are said not to care for their neighbors, each laying down the law for his wife and children.

Pan was an Arcadien deity who was adopted by the Athenians. He was a lover of caves and lonely places in the woods who slept at noon and ventured into the reed marshes in pursuit of a nymph and emerged with the pan-pipes, a series of whistles which he played. There is no mention of diet, but as the patron of herds and flocks, it hardly seems likely that he ate them.

The fourth wild man is part of a couple, Grendel and his "mother." Green (1973a:94) noted the similarity between these monsters and the Sasquatch, while Bernheimer, strangely enough, failed to note this first view we have of the European wild man devoid of classical overtones. Hrothgar describes the pair as having been seen by his peasants in the moors and marshes: "One of them wore, as well they might notice, the image of woman,⁴ and the other one wretched in the guise of man, ...except he was huger than any of earthman" (Hall 1892:47). The pair was aquatic, had a taste for human flesh, and was active at night.

The descriptions of these four wild men were set down well prior to the Middle Ages. The fifth, which appears in the *Faerie Queen*, I think can be taken as a scholarly distillation of European wild man lore.⁵ Spenser's wild man (Book VI, Canto IIII; see Book I, Canto VI for another characterization, or perhaps a genesis tale) is a dumb, singular, hairy, herbivorous hominid; a woods dweller who was a gallant warrior in the service of a human companion. The similarity between this nameless wild-man and Enkidu is unmistakable, although they are separated by four millennia.

The aquatic nature of the European wild man is noted by Bernheimer (1952:39-40), and there are surviving ballads of Wild Water Men, Kelpies, and Silkies (see Child #113) in which they take human wives, much like the "sea beings" mentioned by Suttles (1972:69).⁶ That the European wild man was nocturnal is suggested by Linnaeus's use of *Homo sylvestris*, *Homo troglodytes*, and *Homo nocturnus* interchangeably.

On the basis of the continuity of certain attributes which I have perceived in the examination of the data, I propose the following generalization of the wild man for purposes of identification. I believe the first attribute and any four of the other constitutes a satisfactory minimum description (Fig. 1).

	Hominid	Sex Distinction	Large and/or Powerful	Hairy	Herbivore/Non-Hunting Omnivore	No Speech/Whistle Shrill Sounds and Roars	Mountain/Woods Dweller	Solitary/Non-Social	Nocturnal	Aquatic
Enkidu		O							O	P
Cyclops		P		O	P	P			O	P
Pan		P		P	O				O	P
Grendel				O	O	O	O			
European Wild Man									P	
Sasquatch										
North American Wild Man										
Soviet Asian Wild Man										
Yeti										P

Fig. 1. Characteristics of various wild men. A blank indicates that the characteristic is specified in the data, often repeatedly. P = possible inference from the data. O = no mention in the data.

The first two attributes of the wild man might at first seem unnecessarily technical. But they refer to concepts of identification which must be nearly as old as man himself. One need not know that a hominid is a habitually erect, bipedally gaited animal to know one when he sees one. This distinction between the carriage of man and the other animals is central to the human experience. No less so is the conclusion that a hominid with breasts is a female. I have suggested "Large and/or Powerful," as opposed to some definite height, for several reasons. First of all, the habit of man in the western technological culture to define things in terms of precise dimensions is relatively new. Man, until fairly recently, has lived surrounded by domesticated and wild animals which were bigger than he. In that context, the question whether man can master an animal (that is, which is more powerful) is more important than size alone. And finally, as in the first two attributes, a man-like animal is likely to carry with it the suggestion that it is man-sized.⁷ The point of the first three attributes is to emphasize the physiological core of the wild man's image.⁸ The fourth attribute, I hope, is self explanatory.

The remaining six attributes are behavioral in nature, and it seems worth pointing out that they also represent, in every instance, the antithesis of human behavior. I will forgo any elaboration of the last four.

The dietary preferences of and the sounds made by the wild man deserve discussion. Basically, there are two beliefs concerning the wild man's eating habits. One is that he is a strict herbivore. The other is that he excludes nothing from his diet save for animals larger than man.⁹ The vocal repertory of the wild man is the most difficult to generalize satisfactorily. That he is without speech and that he whistles are the only two common beliefs. Beyond that, the variety of sounds which he is credited with are nearly endless. "Shrill Sounds and Roars," then, is particularly tentative as an acceptable characterization. I would welcome suggested improvements to it, or any of the others, for that matter.

These, then, are the two areas of potential interest to the anthropologist, and the data which are relevant.

To the layman, possible interpretations of hominid history seem to verge on the infinite. From one to four evolutionary lines are proposed, excluding *Gigantopithecus*. I prefer Robinson's *Paranthropus* theory for one basic reason. If the distinction between "gracile" and "robust" hominid fossils which continues to be made among progressively earlier discoveries in Africa is valid, then I must conclude that Robinson's theory, now nearly two decades old, has been stunningly successful in a predictive sense. The similarities between *Paranthropus* and the wild man are in the record and obvious.

I think several million dollars spent toward obtaining a specimen is justified on the basis of the evidence we presently have. Anything less is likely to be a severe handicap. I am, however, aware that such a sum of money is beyond the means of those who are presently interested in the question, as well as those who might be potentially interested in it. So let us turn to the ethnographers and ethnologists and their lack of interest in the wild man myth.

I do not believe it can be seriously argued that the evidence will allow any conclusion but that there is a basic inability (or unwillingness, which amounts to the same thing) among anthropologists to perceive the wild man myth. It may be described as obscure, even if universal, but it is certainly no secret. You can read about it from *Gilgamesh* to the newspaper account of the latest sighting. As for people's reaction to it, you can consider the stir in Memphis in 1851 or in Murphysboro in 1973, or you can consult Herodotus for an explanation of the Athenian's adoption of Pan from far away Arcadia several hundred years after the basic Greek pantheon was established. The wild man myth is alive in many places, and it has been for a considerable length of time. This was known and discussed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the twentieth century Bernheimer, Porshnev, and Zingg (1939) were able to find the information concerning the wild man, and all for quite different reasons.

Suttles (1972:82), after having noted his thought that Green implies that anthropologists have more data than they have published, observes:

Anthropologists do not consciously suppress information, but they sometimes do not know what to do with it. There are ethnographies of peoples whom I know to have traditions of sasquatch-like beings that make no mention of such traditions; I suspect that these omissions occur not because the writers had never heard of the traditions, but because they did not know how to categorize them.

The validity of Suttles's suspicions are not at issue here (although I share with him the former), but the situation which they seek to explain. While nineteenth century newspaper editors were generally able to properly identify occurrences of the wild man myth by headlining them "Wild Man of the Woods," or some variation; and while twentieth century physical anthropologists have been able to recognize the wild man myth under as outlandish names as Sasabonsam, snallygaster, wampus, and woolybooger;¹⁰ some myth gatherers in the Pacific Northwest were unable to find a category for the Sasquatch phenomenon. So they edited it out! It was not, and is not, a regional failing. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1958) acknowledges neither "wild man" nor "man of the woods" as a category of significance.

The wild man myth is all too handy when an anthropologist wants to ridicule the idea that the Sasquatch phenomenon is worthy of serious discussion. The wild man is trivial because the myth is universal, we are informed. But when the myth gatherers are out gathering, we count ourselves lucky if the local wild man makes the gloss.

One example of this strange, scholarly sleight of hand that I am familiar with is the Jersey Devil, as the myth is called in southern New Jersey. Those who are interested in the physical reality behind the wild man must realize that despite New Jersey's population density, it has significant wilderness. The population of the Pine Barrens, which includes several hundred thousand acres, is quite small, and it is concentrated mainly in little towns. South of the Pine Barrens, along the shores of Delaware Bay, Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean, is a system of

swamp and salt marsh which extends, without major interruption, to the Everglades and the Big Cypress Swamp in south Florida. There we find the Skunk Ape, a wild man by yet another name.

Green (1973:2) reports two people mentioning to him the similarity between the Jersey Devil and the Sasquatch in the Patterson film. My informant, William McAfee, was born and raised in central New Jersey, and is familiar with southern New Jersey through scouting activities and hunting. After learning of my interest in the Sasquatch and hearing a description of it, he volunteered the information that the Jersey Devil was a similar animal, so he had heard, although not as big.

In addition to being a hairy hominid, the Jersey Devil is reported to show up in berry patches, a herbivore's haunt if there ever was one. His affinity for swamps, marshes, and rivers is established, and he has even been described as frolicking in the surf. He peeps in windows and sings bass solos at night, and is solitary. Although there is other, sometimes conflicting, published information concerning the Jersey Devil, given the image of a hairy hominid he exhibits characteristics which are typical of the wild man myth.¹¹

The Jersey Devil is not, however, generally considered to be a wild man myth. In fact, if anything may be said about the Jersey Devil, it is that an image is conspicuously lacking.

The major ethnographic work concerned with southern New Jersey is Herbert N. Halpert's *Folktales and Legends from the New Jersey Pines*, a collection and a study (1948), in which the Jersey Devil is barely mentioned. Halpert (1948:269) notes that "the story of Leed's Devil, widely known as the 'Jersey Devil,' is the most publicized of all South Jersey legends," but he does not tell us why. He admits (1948:275) that "like the stories of Leed's Devil, they (other devil stories) are told seriously, as actual occurrences," but all he tells us about the Jersey Devil is a couple of genesis tales (basically, an unwanted thirteenth child, generally put in the late eighteenth century). As a work dealing with the folkways of an isolated rural enclave, Halpert's work is lucid and sympathetic. As a collection, his avoidance of the Jersey Devil might be regarded as curious.

Henry Carelton Beck must be counted as the major proponent of the Jersey Devil. A past president of the New Jersey Folklore Society, he read a paper entitled "The Jersey Devil and Other Legends of the Jersey Shore" to the New York Folklore Society which was published in the *New York Folklore Quarterly* (1947). The Jersey Devil also merited a chapter in *Jersey Genesis* (1945, 1963), although there is no further mention of it in *The Roads of Home, lanes and legends of New Jersey* (1956).

In *Jersey Genesis* (1945:240) Beck relates:

Since first they were aware, Jersey ears have heard grim whisperings about the Jersey Devil. Newspapers used to carry little stories and sometimes long feature articles concerned with certain inexplicable happenings in queer places, odd

noises strangely linked with swamps and salt marshes and Mullica fastness, with reputable folk telling and repeating shuddersome anecdotes lacking what old-fashioned mortals call common sense.

In his 1947 paper Beck (1947:102) begins:

It is always a source of amazement to me when someone turns up who admits a total ignorance of The Jersey Devil, New Jersey's most celebrated -- and most maligned -- phantom of the shore. I grew up in an area of New Jersey where The Jersey Devil was accepted as very real and usually blamed for everything strange that happened. If a farmer discovered peculiar footprints in his dooryard, if someone heard weird cries hooted down a country chimney, or if a petty theft lacked a customary explanation, The Jersey Devil was always given headlines as the culprit responsible.

In a happier context we might suppose that Beck, a man intimately familiar with the Jersey Devil, would have recorded one, if not several, images of it, but he did not. In *Jersey Genesis* he said he was in touch with an elderly woman who claimed to have been chased by the Jersey Devil as a girl, and said he hoped to soon have an eye-witness description of the creature. Two years later in the 1947 paper he repeats the story about the "fine old lady" without telling us what her description was, if any. The total effect is to imply that Beck is ready and willing -- even eager -- to inform us, but alas, no image of the Jersey Devil is to be found.

Yet tucked away at the end of an earlier chapter of *Jersey Genesis*, one which describes the life and habits of Sammy Ford in approving tones, is this curiously truncated snatch of dialogue (Beck 1945:191):

Sammy Ford: "The swamps is healthy. And maybe, if you keep quiet and watch, you can see the Jersey Devil."

Sammy said it quietly as if there were no hokus-pokus about it. I tried to be as matter of fact as he. "I didn't know," I said, "that the Jersey Devil was still around. I didn't think he got back this far." [vicinity of Green Bank, New Jersey].

"Well, he does," Sammy told me. "Sometimes."

End of conversation, end of chapter, and end of any pretense on Beck's part, so far as I am concerned, that he is seriously interested in the image of the Jersey Devil, except to suppress it.

In an ideal world where the continued vitality of the wild man myth could be regarded with appropriate awe, our judgement of Beck would be more severe. As it is, we must be thankful that he wrote and published *something* about the Jersey Devil. Ethnographers have done less for wild men they encountered. We might even congratulate him for not encumbering the myth with the fantastic fowl-fox-and-reptile image which feature-writers in the east find so irresistible. Such is the plight of the wild

man myth in the twentieth century. Now, to show any interest in it automatically brings membership in the "monster establishment." If one suggests that a physical anthropologist might be interested in it, or if not, then perhaps a cultural anthropologist, one is labeled a "sasquatch lover" (Thorington's term). "People see what they want to see." A very pithy observation, and one which is, I might point out, decidedly double-edged.

Why do people believe in the wild man myth? Suttles inadvertently strikes to the heart of the matter (1972:65-66):

I do not think we can assume from the outset that there is a single image for which "sasquatch" is only one of many names, unless we assume before-hand that the terms do in fact refer to a real animal of wide distribution. If the terms "sasquatch," etc, refer only to imaginary beings then there may be as many images as there are names or even imaginations.

In examining the record, from Enkidu -- that guiding light to all true sasquatch lovers (as Thorington puts it) which probably predates the proto-literate period of the Sumerian culture back to a truly ancient oral tradition -- to the latest sighting or encounter story which is carried by the media in recognizable form, there proves to be no reason whatsoever to make an assumption about a single image. Hairy hominids are a dime a dozen. The closer you get to them, the more strikingly similar they become. Until, of course, you lose sight of them for one reason or another. Or they begin to look ridiculous to you, or worse, unmentionable.

Berheimer (1952:24), in developing his ubiquitous subject, serves up the following paragraph and footnote:

So far the wild man is a kind of ogre, a creature designed to spread terror among the credulous. It is not suprising that old-fashioned nurses should have used stories about him as pedagogical fictions to frighten obstreperous children into obedience. (According to modern theories of folklore many of the characteristics of the wild man may have been invented to serve as pedagogical fictions.)

Yet the *Play of the Death of the Wild Man* must have been a money maker among adults. Pieter Brueghel the Elder graphically recorded its performance twice, each time showing a pecuniary response from the audience. The film *The Legend of Boggy Creek* apparently paid off too. Perhaps there is a lesson in these successes for those who dare to look beyond the clutter of conventional wisdom, outrageous prevarication, and shallow analysis which the subject seems to naturally attract.

The wild man phenomenon, of which the Sasquatch phenomenon is but a small part, may well prove to be universal. Its total dimensions, however, have yet to be defined, described, or analyzed. The question why the subject has been so studiously ignored in the western intellectual tradition might also be raised. And I suspect that there are other, perhaps more profound, questions which the whole phenomenon raises which my

lack of conceptual training in anthropology prevents me from recognizing or framing. But if I am mistaken in that regard, I nevertheless feel confident in concluding that within the context of presently ascertainable data pertaining to the wild man, the taking of a specimen is not a valid prerequisite for scientific interest. That the absence of a specimen looms so large in some scientific minds is but a further indication, as I see it, of the inability to perceive the true dimensions and strength of the myth, to say nothing of the probable reality which stands behind it.

What must come first is the careful and dispassionate examination of the evidence, and expansion of it. This done, the reflex of anthropologists and others to ridicule or trivialize the wild man will lose its appeal. As the subject continues to receive serious notice and study, I believe the evidence in North America (and potentially, throughout the world) will undergo exponential growth. The need for an adequate effort to obtain a specimen will become obvious in time, as a natural consequence.

I find the wild man phenomenon sufficiently thought provoking in the absence of a specimen. I think anthropologists might find it so too, whether it is ultimately judged neglected myth, or an important clue to the greatest scientific discovery of the century.

Notes

¹That Thorington, a biologist who succeeded Napier as the Director of the Primate Biology Program but who does not share Napier's enthusiasm for the subject, is the spokesman for the Smithsonian Institution on this matter is a clear victory of anthropological avoidance over logic.

²Bayanov tells me the first published mention of the *Paranthropus* hypothesis was by Tschernezsky as an appendix to Izzard (1955). I have not seen it, and believe it is limited to the United Kingdom edition. Among the adherents is zoologist Pyotr Smolin, Chairman of the Hominoid Problem Seminar and retired Chief Curator of the Darwin Museum. What I take to be Napier's (1970:198-201) trial balloon on behalf of the idea has thusfar failed to excite much interest among anthropologists.

³I believe this article first appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The records of which the late Dr. McCown so solemnly spoke have not yet come to light, as far as I know.

⁴How delightful to read, eleven hundred odd years later (1870): "He returned, and was joined by another -- a female, unmistakably" (Green 1973a:120).

⁵Bernheimer (1952:112-13) disagrees. But Spenser could not have been aware of *Gilgamesh*, whatever his classical knowledge.

⁶Possibly related is the Northwest Coast "Sea Grizzly Bear." The one on the totem in the southwest corner of the main hall of the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History has no ears.

⁷At a distance a hominid is assumed to be man-sized. If it gets bigger as it gets closer, it might be thought a "shape-changer" or "size-shifter." See Suttles (1972:75) and Bernheimer (1952:44-47). If, on the other hand, this is taken as magic power, compare these two sources on the wild man's ability to "make crazy" or "make wild."

⁸The argument behind Napier's (1972:22) assertion that a valid distinction between wild men and nonhuman monsters can be made escapes me. I would welcome the opportunity to examine the data on which it is based.

⁹The wild man can be protector of game or King of the Animals. Enkidu appears to be the proto-type for that popular Mesopotamian deity. The European wild man was often cast in the role, just as apparently the Twana "Little Earths" were (Suttles 1972:79). As for the wild man on the south slope of the Himalayas, de Nevesky-Wojkowitz (1956:344) observes in a footnote: "The Lepchas worship this being as the god of hunt and owner of all mountain game."

¹⁰Some lists of pseudonyms for the wild man may be found in Bernheimer (1952), Green (1973a, 1973b), Grumley (1974), Heuvelmans (1959, 1974), Iluraith (1948), Kirtley (1964), Napier (1972), Porshnev (1968), Rigsby (1971), Suttles (1972), Sanderson (1961), and Tchernine (1971).

¹¹See *The New York Times* and *Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*.

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